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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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SELECTIONS FROM ESTRATEGIA

No. 57, MARCH-APRIL 1979

CONTENTS

PAGE

ARGENTINA

Guglielmelli Reflects on Nation's Geopolitical Situation

(Juan E. Guglielmelli).....

1

GUGLIALMELLI REFLECTS ON NATION'S GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION

Buenos Aires ESTRATEGIA in Spanish No 57, Mar-Apr 79 pp 5-15

[Article by Div Gen (Ret.) Juan E. Guglielmelli: "Argentina--Geopolitics and Frontiers"<sup>1</sup>]

[Text] Geopolitics is the science that studies the influence which materializes reciprocally between the geographic factors and the politically organized communities.

During the current stage of the worldwide historical process, these communities are made up by the national state. In other words, we are dealing here with relations between states (geographic environment) and the national society which, as such, develops its activity in that space. Since society is a biocultural entity, this science covers three major groups of corresponding subjects: The biological group (conditions of "space" necessary for organized human existence); cultural ("space" as against the development of all components of national culture); security or "geostrategy" ("space" as against the requirements for security and national defense).

Geopolitics thus covers a vast field of problems, all of which are of singular significance. Given the limited "periodical space" available, this justifies us in taking up only one of the most important aspects of this impassioned science: National frontiers. Their current situation. The basic problem to be solved.

Frontiers

There are two possible points of confusion on this topic which, for the purpose of these considerations, must be clarified. The first one concerns the difference between boundary and frontier. This is a linear concept. It simply determines national jurisdictions. Frontier is a geoenvironmental idea; in other words, it deals with a "geocultural" environment of variable size which extends from the particular boundary and which is closely tied to the neighboring frontier. Let us describe this concept specifically in the case of the Beagle. Here it is fundamental to defend the boundary inherited from our ancestors; but it is also highly significant to preserve and develop "the frontier" since the latter constitutes the effective support of the former.



The second aspect relates to the traditional thinking on the subject of frontier as against its modern interpretation. Under the current concept, frontiers constitute the peripheral borders of the state. This notion, which has current validity, however turns out to be insufficient because it does not include a primordial area which does however include the boundary line mentioned. I am talking here about national culture.

### National Culture as Frontier

Culture is man's ability to work upon himself and upon nature.

Man cultivates himself and, with the instruments he creates, he acts upon and modifies the outside world under specific spatial and environmental circumstances. These latter two components constitute the nation. Culture therefore is always national; it is the consequence of a process where standards of universal culture are assimilated or enriched by the autochthonous factors. From a geopolitical viewpoint, national culture today is the principal frontier.<sup>2</sup> It is projected toward the outside and from there in turn it receives profound influence. These interrelationships grow day after day as a consequence of a series of facts which we need not list here.

It is worth adding however that the major foreign interests or their domestic agents work upon national culture in its two areas, separately or in close conjunction. In the spiritual field they do so in various ways although this is done particularly through the mass communications media (radio, television, the press, books, the movies, etc.) and through aspects tied to education. In material terms, that is, the economy, this is done through the theoretical and practical action which ranges from postulating regional and/or worldwide systems made up of countries that specialize in certain sectors of production, all the way to the infiltration of their agents and ideological allies into the key positions of economic management. Thus there appears a new international division of labor for the benefit of its promoters, that is, the highly industrialized countries and the big multinational enterprises. Concerning foreign penetration of, and influence in the economy, General Savio--who was not a "statist," and who did not recommend "isolation" sheltered by utopian autarchy--said something that is always worth remembering: "Economic pressure is stronger than the pressure of war. It is not cruel but it is implacable and integral." Let us add that, generally speaking, economic interests work upon the economy and, simultaneously, upon some components of the spiritual environment for the purpose of obtaining an ideological hold suitable for their economic goals. In summary, national culture, by virtue of its relevance, requires special attention which it is not always easy to keep up since, due to the traditional viewpoint and the ever probable detection of pressures, it is more feasible to know and be attracted by that which happens in the frontier area. Sometimes we say--and it is now worth repeating this--that "for him who wishes to dominate, cultural submission turns out to be the less cruel victory since it does not require any bloodshed or any occupation force, because the native becomes the docile instrument of the alien cause." If we compare this situation to the tree, what good is it to protect its bark from external depredation if we allow the trunk, through which flows the sap that gives it life, to rot away?

## Peripheral Frontiers

Let us next comment on the most important problems encountered in Argentine frontiers. For better understanding, let us take up the questions of the actual boundary in order then to go on to national culture or the internal frontier.

In the Northeast we encounter some serious circumstances and some worse prospects. Notwithstanding some minor problems with Paraguay, the basic issue is rooted in Brazil's global challenge which covers the entire Southern Horn of the hemisphere and which, in the specific area of the Argentine Northeast, is expressed in very specific facts, such as population pressure, economic and commercial advance upon the land between the rivers, particularly Misiones and the far northeast of Corrientes; physical integration with general east-west orientation to expand the hinterland of its ports of Santos-Paranagua and Porto Alegre-Rio Grande. Finally, we have the Itaipu-Corpus issue as a part of the entire group of topics involving resources shared along the Upper Parana, a sector of "unique geographic aspects." These are apparently isolated issues which in reality however constitute components of a Brazilian policy and strategy pursuing open hegemonism over the entire region. This supremacy is not confined to the Southern Horn since, in the words of Golbery de Couto Silva, Brazil has a "manifest destiny" over all of South America which is also projected, as we shall see later on, toward the South Atlantic and the Antarctic.

Regarding the Brazilian challenge, we stated on another occasion that, both in terms of politics and in terms of strategy, the predominant factor is national power, in other words, the relationship of forces necessary to attain the objectives pursued. In the case of Argentina and Brazil, only effective and adequate national strength will be a guarantee for negotiation and, in the final instance, for the attainment of objectives in peace. Our weakness will inexorably lead us into subordination or conflict. Strength, accelerated development of the national potential on the other hand, will lead to agreement and cooperation.

In Patagonia we have as a principal disturbing factor the pressure from Chilean, a product of natural factors as well as a political determination aimed at "breaking out of its geopolitical encirclement," an old claim which from a fixed idea has been transformed into an obsession to the detriment of Argentina. A natural component of that attitude is represented by our inviting population vacuum in the area with regard to Chile's population surplus. That country's population is squeezed into an area of 290,000 square kilometers, only one-third of its total surface area. In population terms, looking at the population of Chile as against the population of Patagonia, as well as our inhabitants in that area<sup>3</sup>, the pressure index is 4.6 in favor of the trans-Andeans. Chile uses radio and territorial pressure as part of its political effort. It uses radio since the frequencies and power of its radio broadcasting stations enables it to cover the entire area south of the Negro River. In territorial terms it uses two different operational methods. The first one involves limited penetration in some border areas, exploiting our traditional "lack of concern"

with the frontier regions. The second and fundamental one involves pressure aimed at achieving sovereignty over the South Atlantic, today expressed in the case of the Beagle, to which we add, "in passing," the intention of grabbing the eastern outlet of the Strait of Magellan. In this latter case, it could, on top of everything else, claim the corresponding 200-mile maritime zone. These latter two aspects are entirely too well known for us to dwell on them here. There is one point that however must be considered. Although right now negotiations are going on in Rome with the "mediation assistance" of the Holy Father, represented by Cardinal Antonio Samore, the final decision is not yet assured. This is why it is not only necessary for us not to drop our guard but also to prepare ourselves spiritually and materially for an extreme crisis which we do not want but which it would be suicidal not to anticipate.

In the Argentine Sea there are threats and specific challenges. The first one involves the case of British intrusion, established since 1833 on the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the Southern Sandwich Islands. But beyond our basic rights here, this occupation influences Argentina's exploitation of the surrounding sea, in particular, the hydrocarbons of the Falkland Basin, the mining wealth in its bed and its fishing potential, especially krill. Besides, from a geostrategic viewpoint, control of this island group by Great Britain affects the security and control of the southern sector of the South Atlantic, an aspect further aggravated by the underdevelopment of the province of Santa Cruz and the Governorate of Tierra del Fuego. In turn, the strategic weakness described here is further increased as a result of the commitments undertaken in the Antarctic Treaty because, by virtue of its provision, there cannot be any bases, fortifications, or other facilities of a military nature (Article I, Paragraph 1). Negotiations were resumed with Great Britain starting in 1977. But the discussion is slow and laborious. Argentina places the aspect of sovereignty above all else. London subordinates this problem--which is the real issue here--to economic cooperation. It tries to get the most out of this aspect before moving on to resolve the substantial issue. It goes without saying that in the case of the Falkland Islands and in the case of the Beagle, we must be prepared to display a capacity that will enable us, if required, to demand a total and final solution. Other aspects influencing the Argentine Sea can be summarized as follows: Problems from the Conference on the Law of the Sea, under the United Nations. Legislation on sovereignty over the water, the ocean floor, and the subsoil is included among the many topics on its agenda; these aspects can affect our jurisprudence on this score; illegal incursions for fishing; Brazil's claim to the South Atlantic, ranging from a pretended monopoly in terms of military responsibility to a leadership role over the same; the growing activity of the naval forces of the superpowers, in view of the strategic-military importance assumed by the South Atlantic, the obligatory passage for large vessels between the North Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific. This significance will increase in case of the closing of or problems in the Suez Canal or the Panama Canal; finally, advance of the new African states to the South Atlantic.

It goes without saying that, to cope with these conflicting circumstances, we will need adequate naval and air power, strongly supported from the Continent and a policy aimed at the effective occupation and exploitation of its resources.



In the Argentine Antarctic, our sector has been claimed by Great Britain, Chile, in turn, claims a part of that sector as its own (between 53° and 90° West longitude from Greenwich.). On the basis of the thesis of "boundary removal," certain personalities in Brazil claim that their country is entitled to the sector between the meridians of 15° and 53° West and the Martin Vaz island group. We must also be concerned with what seems to be looming on the horizon in other respects. On the one hand, there is the concern of the big powers with internationalizing the continent. On the other hand, there is the effort of the multinational corporations to exploit the major proven natural resources, as well as others which they suspect can be found here.

### Culture Frontier

This so transcendent frontier today reveals the successes, the errors, and the failures of the Argentine historical process. There are situations whose origins go back to the end of the 19th Century. Others go back to less distant years. Many of them date back to the immediate past. We encounter circumstances that are the product of specifically domestic causes. And there are also those that are derived from foreign motives. In this latter sense, we must not fail to point out that there are at this time two major worldwide contradictions hovering over us: East-West (ideological and political); North-South (developed countries--underdeveloped countries). Therefore, and keeping in mind this diversity of causes and factors involved in the two areas of this frontier, we consider it suitable, following a very general outline, specifically to spell out our reflections on certain aspects in the field of education and economics.

From an overall perspective, the termination of the violence the country experienced in recent years created better conditions for the overall development of our society. In spiritual terms, the case of the Beagle and the world soccer championship (1978), like a healthy national passion, demonstrated the need for powerful motivations in affirming and consolidating the unity of all Argentines. But factors which must be overcome remain, and we can list some of them as follows: Ideological confusion and contradictions; crisis among the summit in some representative sectors; political institutions untimely, if not challenged; potential social problems, deriving from the economic situation of the workers and the middle classes in terms of [foreign] dependence; transculturation and distortions of moral values and lifestyle through certain mass communications media, in particular, television; finally, the drain of our best engineers and specialists.

### Education

Here we have a dangerous lag. A few days ago, the new education minister disclosed the sector's objectives. Without going into a discussion of those objectives, we must recall that experience demonstrates that simply listing objectives is not enough but that it is rather necessary to provide specific instruments. There are crying failures in the content of education which must be updated and integrated vertically according to the various levels of public education. Nor do we have optimum conditions in areas tied to the scientific-technical sector and the specifically cultural sector.

Educational on top of all this is affected by the general economic situation since, except for a few jurisdictions, available financial resources interfere with optimum educational development. This situation has various consequences: Low pay for teachers and university professors; inadequate or permanently deteriorating installations; difficulties in getting modern teaching material and tools for adequate and complete scientific and technological research.

The economic difficulties in turn weigh heavily on another level: The students. Many social sectors find it extremely difficult to get education not only because of the cost of the material indispensable for the students but also because of the need for the students to work, to contribute money to his own existence or that of the family. The high school dropout rate shown by the statistics therefore is no surprise here.

#### The Economy

It is one of the key sectors of the nation's activities. In spite of some positive achievements here, among which we might mention the termination of the virtual cessation of payments in 1976 and the subsequent accumulation of a large amount of foreign exchange in reserve (whose makeup and immobilized surplus may be questioned), the situation is extremely grave. This is true not only because of the structural flaws in our production machinery (lack of sector and space integration) but also by virtue of the results of the economic measures that were taken. In connection with this last aspect, we might mention some data: High rates of inflation; decline in purchasing power of wages and salaries; excessive financing costs; heavy tax pressure; shrinkage of domestic market; major industrial sectors in danger of disappearing due to foreign competition which has the benefit of low customs duties, cost of domestic production and over-evaluation of the peso with respect to the dollar; excessive current spending; lack of government financing capacity which influences public investment; lack of incentives for private investment further aggravated by the reduced or perhaps even zero profitability of enterprises.

This unique situation is just that not only as a result of possible instrumental errors but, fundamentally, as a consequence of the "liberal cosmopolitan" philosophy (prevalence of regional and worldwide aspects to the detriment of the national aspect) which guides current economic policy. This is not something new but rather derives from the old free-trade ideology in a different setup, that is, "the opening of the economy." Definitely foreign-inspired, one of its enthusiastic promoters, Nelson Rockefeller, defined it in very specific terms: Each country will specialize according to its highest selective efficiency and greatest relative efficiency. This thesis fits perfectly into the interest of the big industrialized nations and is especially suitable for the multinationals whose programs are drawn up in keeping with a worldwide market that pushes specific national interests out of the way.

By virtue of this basic concept, there will be a new international division of labor. In it, based on so-called relative advantages, it will be up to

Argentina to specialize in agribusiness, in other words, not abandoning our traditional farm export model, modernized through the processed food sector. The publicity surrounding the "blessings" of the "opening of the economy" appears highly profitable toward this end because, over the past 2 or 3 years, it has been common practice to offer a platform in various institutions to economists and businessmen tied to that approach; besides, certain press organs keep publishing articles with the same goal in mind. This is an effort that received impetus from abroad, especially through the "Trilateral Commission" which is directed by David Rockefeller (a confessed admirer of current Argentine economic policy), to which we must add other Latin American organizations, such as the IDB, INTAL [Institute for the Integration of Latin America], and IACCP, as well as some organizations in Argentina, including the Argentine Chamber of Commerce, the Commodity Exchange Foundation, the Center for Studies on Liberty, and the Argentine Manufacturers Association. But it must be emphasized that, in spite of the resultant "benefits," which presumably may derive from the "open economy," there are two personalities of international standing who do not consider Argentina to be a country of the first magnitude in the continent's future. I am talking here about the advisor to President Carter an outstanding member of the Trilateral Commission, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and French President Giscard D'Estaing. Both of them recently, on different occasions, stated that the big powers in Latin America by the year 2000 will be Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, in that order.

The suprising thing in these statements is that it is precisely Brazil that does not accept the "opening of its economy," that is to say, to remove the protection on its own industry to the benefit of foreign industry or to subordinate its strategy in this matter to the convenience of foreign countries whenever that does not agree with its own national interest. In the final analysis, industrial growth shielded by a protectionist system is something more than a statement of clear-sighted economists, such as the German F. List, the American Carey, or our fellow citizens Vicente F. Lopez, Carlos Pellegrini, Dardo Rocha, Miguel Cane, Manuel Savio, Alejandro Bunge, and others<sup>4</sup>.

From a historical perspective, industrial protection was the method used by the big powers in the modern world to emerge as such. This is what was done by Germany, Japan, France, or the Soviet Union. And this is also true of the United States of America where protectionism was breached and practiced by Alexander Hamilton from the day after independence, an idea which finally triumphed during the Civil War with the victory of the industrial states in the north over the agricultural-livestock and free-trade southern states.

The thesis constituting the foundation of growth in a new field of specialization imposed by the availability of natural resources is contradicted by the fast growth of Japan, a country that has no raw materials and energy. If possession of those two items were the decisive condition in determining the overall development of industry, Japan today would be fundamentally a nation of fishermen, backward when compared to Bolivia just like one of those African countries which, however, do have those resources in abundance.

This is why the agribusiness scheme proposed to us can be judged only as a modern version of the formula proposed a century ago by Canning, to the effect that America would have to be the farm and England would be the factory. But this is a simple and elementary substitution. Canning is now Rockefeller and the old "liberal cosmopolitan" theory continues to give life to a colonialist profile, similar to that of last century, when the dominant power reserved itself the right to integral industrialization, while it imposed the model that suited it best upon the rest of the countries, without worrying that this pattern might historically free some of them in the status of satellite--or seeking this as an objective indeed.

For my part, I maintain with every emphasis that the materialization of this model dooms Argentina to foreign dependence, trims its national decision-making capacity, and does not make it possible to meet the requirements for wellbeing and prosperity to which our society is entitled. Regarding the country's national security, it affects integrated national power, it restricts the freedom of strategic action, and creates serious vulnerability in the relationship of forces with other members of the Southern Horn, particularly Brazil. Finally, in domestic terms, it confronts us with a permanent situation of dissatisfaction and social agitation.

This farm-exporter model which turns us into the food-supplying appendix of the highly industrialized countries, is not the model promoted by the national reorganization process whose basic objectives, in economic terms, pursue a different structure. This circumstance was expressed specifically through statements coming from the highest levels of government. Indeed, Adm Armando Lambruschini said that we will not go back "to the destiny of a colonial Argentina. I can assert categorically that this is not the intention of the armed forces" (24 April 1979 speech to the Argentine Chamber of Construction). And President Gen Jorge Rafael Videla, himself, in his speech on Industry Day (2 September 1977) declared among other things, the following along the same lines: "The country must urgently expand, protect, and complete its basic industrial structure. This means that we must without delay tackle the implementation of the major projects in the plan for the steel industry, the heavy chemical industry, petrochemistry, cellulose, and paper." These concepts in turn were confirmed by the president at Mar del Plata in closing the conference on agribusiness development (22 September 1978) with these words: "Our rural areas will not attain the high output level we want if our steel industry does not supply the steel for farm machinery and silos; if our petrochemistry does not supply us with the indispensable fertilizer and pesticides; if our science does not provide us with the knowledge necessary to control plagues, to maintain the fertility of our soil, and to step up genetic research."

These assertions<sup>5</sup> stimulate the conviction as to the timely corrections in current economic policy as well as the adjustment of its instrumental means to the goal pursued. What happened during the Argentine revolution undoubtedly will not happen; in spite of the many voices of alarm, no calm and objective evaluation was made of the economic strategy applied at that time. On that occasion, the economic leadership moved against the objectives pursued in that sector, making itself primarily responsible for the failure of that revolution.



## Answer From Geopolitical Perspection

Geopolitically speaking, Argentina is peninsular, which means that our country is a continental, two-ocean and Patagonic-Antarctic country.

This overall concept includes two areas which are closely linked: Space (which we illustrate in the attached map) and culture.

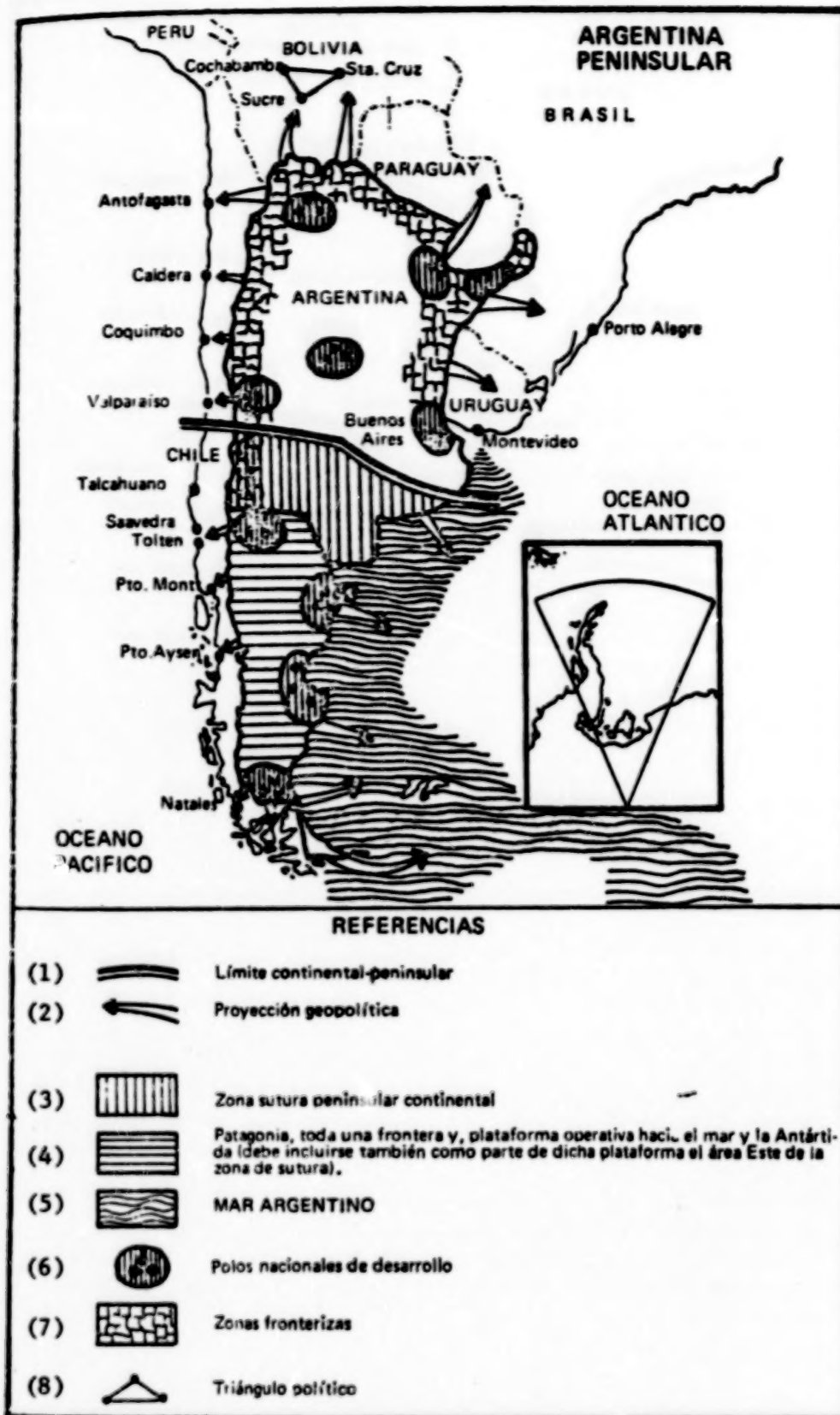
The cultural coordinate constitutes the substance of the space covered. National culture nourishes, consolidates, and strengthens national (economic-political-military) power which, in turn, generates the "social creative capacity." According to Toynbee, this faculty is responsible for finding adequate responses to the challenges which a society may face.

In the context, the economy is the basis of the nation's material power, the sustenance of its well being and spiritual growth. It determines the country's real power, its sovereign capacity, its level of independence. In that sense, in economic terms, the general objectives of Peninsular Argentina, can be summarized in the following manner: Sector integration of the production machinery; geoeconomic integration of the nation and consolidation of national decision-making power. To achieve that, the following overall priorities will have to be implemented; Economic infrastructure; promotion and development of basic sectors and industry; "interiorization" of development; expansion and consolidation of domestic market, national integration over regional integration.

Our geopolitical design however does not just boil down to the material area of culture, that is to say, the economy. We would be inconsistent with ourselves and with the fundamental principles of science if we were to omit the cornerstone of our concept which is, "an organized and solidly integrated space, we must build a society without spiritual cracks. Among the various sectors constituting it and that society must moreover participate in the management of the common good and the fair distribution of the prosperity achieved."

To satisfy this requirement, there is no alternative other than peremptory national organization. This is "the thing that has to be done" in coping with the grave circumstances we mentioned. It is a task that must be based on three pillars: The defense of moral and spiritual values; the defense, training, and (qualitative and quantitative) development of its human resources; and the development and exploitation of all of its natural resources together with the optimum and constant development of its production forces.





Key: 1--Continental-peninsular boundary; 2--Geopolitical projection; 3--Peninsular-continental linkage zone; 4--Patagonia, a frontier by itself, and base of operations toward the sea and the Antarctic (the eastern portion of the linkage zone must also be included as part of this base); 5--Argentine Sea; 6--National development centers; 7--Frontier zones; 8--Political triangle.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. This article was published with some changes that do not basically alter its content in the LA NUEVA PROVINCIA (Bahia Bianca, Province of Buenos Aires) on 11 May 1979, under the title "Reflections on Argentina's Geopolitical Situation." On the other hand, this is an expanded updating of my work "Argentina: National Policy and Frontier Policy--National Crisis and Frontier Problems," published in ESTRATEGIA, No. 37/38, December, 1975-February 1976.
2. National culture, as a frontier, has two dimensions, that is, spiritual (covering the following components: Science, ethics, esthetics, religion, social-political methods, lifestyle) and material (including technology, production methods and economic systems, that is to say, the economy).
3. According to the 1970 census, the Argentine population in Patagonia is 707,227. The estimate for Chile during that same year south of Linares and Nuble (inclusive) is 3,318,000. We might add the population density figure in both areas considered: Chile with 9 inhabitants per square kilometer; Patagonia with 0.9.
4. Concerning our famous economists whom we call "national liberals" in contrast to the "cosmopolitan liberals," the reader is referred to ESTRATEGIA, document series No.2, "Protection for National Industry--1876 Debate--Chamber of Deputies of the Nation" and my article entitled "Carlos Pellegrini: Protection for National Industry," ESTRATEGIA, No.45, March, April 1977.
5. Almost simultaneously with the appearance of this article and shortly thereafter, Adm Armando Lambruschini (CLARIN, 11 May 1979) and Brig Gen Omar Graffigna (CLARIN, 1 June 1979) stated that they support the philosophy of the economic plan although they did admit the need for correcting some aspects in it. The former commander-in-chief of the navy and member of the prior Military Junta Adm Emilio Eduardo Massera, stated in Rosario (CLARIN, 1 June 1979) that current economic policy "is shaping Argentine society within patterns that are not contained in the documents instituting the process itself."

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